

The '90s femme fatale

Women misuse the word 'bitch' as a positive term to equate strength

I was driving in my car listening to the radio one day. Then this song comes on, and it has been on the radio for a while now.



JOE SCHUMACHER
columnist

... "I did not care to listen to it in depth. Halfway into the song I would not take it any more and turn it in a tape of my own.

However, after the "intellectually stimulating" lyrics, two thoughts then occurred to me.

This seems to be a song celebrating the diversity of womanhood (i.e., the many roles they play in life). But I would never call my mother, or any other important woman in my life, a "bitch" as a term of endearment.

It seems Brooks is not the only one who seems to take joy in referring to herself as a bitch.

What is worse is the chorus of women singing along with Brooks. Surely you have heard other women say, "I can be a real bitch," usually almost taking pride in that fact.

Additionally, Brooks, a stringy-haired, lily white girl, performs a song with "bitch" in it and it is a top-ten hit. People, women in particular, seem to like the song and like the idea of being a bitch. Chances are you will not see some guy singing along.

This song, along with a host of other radio-friendly tunes performed by other women, has become an anthem for pseudo-feminism.

However, when Ice Cube, a gangsta rapper, writes a song like "Life ain't nothin' but bitches and money," the same word is used, but Ice Cube is considered a woman-hater.

Cube's usage of the word seems to reduce women to a material status, so why doesn't Brooks' use do the same?

The word bitch is not a homonym. The dictionary still defines it as a female dog and that cannot be very appealing.

However, Brooks' song seems to sing about being a bitch as something to be proud of and join hands in praise.

The word "bitch" has historically been a derogatory word when used toward women. Now it seems that some people, some pop singers in particular, are trying to change the definition of the word.

However, by associating all these positive attributes with

this insulting word, all that is being done is furthering the stereotype that the only way for a woman to get any respect is to be a bitch.

Maybe the idea is that by giving this word positive meanings, it will erase the intended insult.

It is a shame that this word often is associated with a woman who is strong, ambitious and determined. "Bitch" is still a horrible word to use in reference to a woman, regardless of what positive meanings have been attached to it.

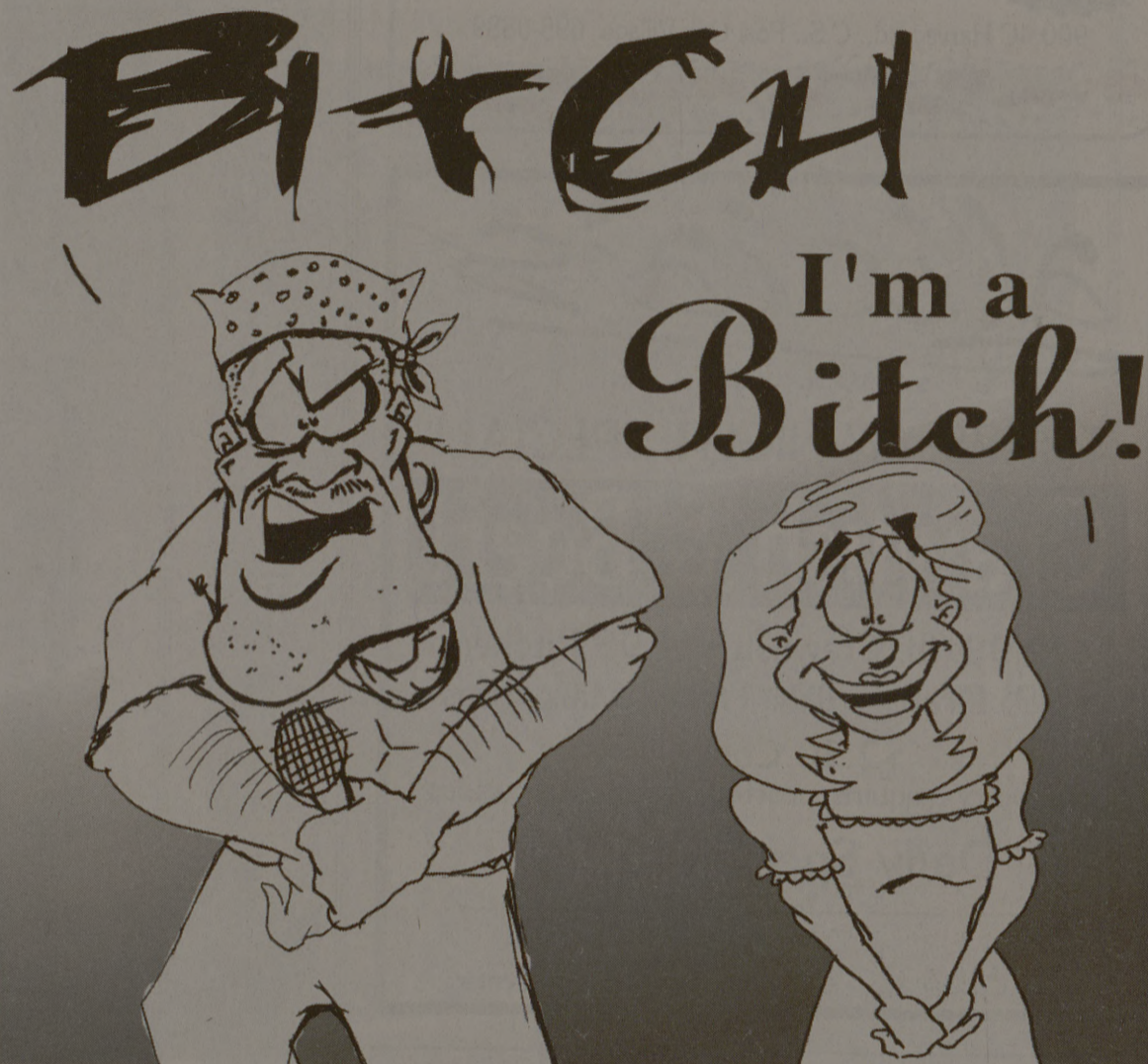
This usage of word seems to suggest that the only way for a woman to be successful is to take on the qualities of a bitch.

The notion is that if a woman wishes to avoid being a bitch, she should not be assertive or have any of her own ideas.

She should not strive for success; she should merely settle for what she has.

The word "bitch," when used toward another human being, especially a woman, is derogatory, no matter how many positive words people try to attribute to it. Women, be strong. Be successful. Be independent. Don't be a bitch.

Joe Schumacher is a senior journalism major.



MIKE LUCKOVICH

Overgrown community shrubbery causes accidents

Many Aggies drive around Bryan-College Station. They usually think nothing of the fact that they are directing more than a ton-and-a-half of steel at speeds of up to 50 miles per hour. And most, if not all, of these students have, at one time or another, gotten into or almost gotten into an auto accident.



CHRIS HUFFINES
columnist

No one is eager to experience another auto accident. However, there is a problem here in Bryan-College Station that is a series of accidents just waiting to happen. It is so simple and so obvious, but no one has recognized the problem to correct it. That problem is that landscaping at the corners of major intersections and driveways is so high many drivers cannot see the road behind these obstructions.

Many people probably do not think this is a problem. Quite frankly, they either a) drive trucks and are usually sitting so high they can see over these shrubs or b) are total idiots who really do not understand that in a T-bone collision, the kind this landscaping is most likely to cause, their chances of survival are lower than their already-low IQ's.

Imagine for a minute the situation. Jane Doe, Class of '86, who is a mother of one and pregnant with her next, is driving along Harvey Road, past the College Station mall. She is taking her son, little Johnny, to see the new Disney movie. Joe Aggie, who is a student at Texas A&M, is driving out of the mall. He gets to the end of the road and pulls out as far as he can. But Joe can't quite see all the way down the road, what with that big bush right by the mall sign.

Jane has the green light, and Joe is going to turn right on red. He does not see her coming, and she assumes he sees her. Jane pulls out, just in time to be hit by Jane. Joe gets broadsided and dies as the front of Jane's car smashes him into something with approximately the consistency of a beanie baby. Jane's child hits the dashboard, with his head, opening a blood vessel in his brain.

He'll probably survive, but if the doctors are not very good very fast, he will suffer brain damage for the rest of his life. Jane hits the airbag, she's okay, but her stomach hits the steering wheel at the forty miles per hour she was travelling and she miscarries the fetus.

This kind of situation is very likely if members of the community do not simply take the time to think and realize that the shrubs look nice but are a hazard to their customers and the community at large. Admittedly, ignorance has caused more than its share of deaths, but this is intolerable.

Unfortunately, Aggies cannot do much directly. The Redpots are not going to lead a detour through town one Saturday and start chopping shrubs. This won't ever make The Big Event's "To-Do" list.

However, Aggies can do a little extra work (I know it's hard) and remember to avoid those corners that are dangerous, and maybe avoid that accident waiting to happen.

Driving any sort of automobile is driving a ton-and-a-half death machine. Cruising around with a spotless record, it is easy to forget that. It usually takes some sort of disaster, minor or major, to shatter the illusion of total safety. Don't let that disaster be a death.

Chris Huffines is a sophomore speech communications major.

Legislature fails to play defense with A&M enrollment policy

As anyone who ever has played a team sport knows, the worst damage is caused not by the opponent who wants to beat you, but by the well-intentioned team member who just isn't any good.



JOHN LEMONS
columnist

After all, in baseball, it is not necessarily the guy batting .400 from the other team that kills you, it is the outfielder who cannot catch a fly ball.

Similarly, it is the well-intentioned Texas Legislature that has opened a Pandora's box full of problems for Texas A&M University this coming fall.

The Legislature, in an attempt to counteract the effects of the now infamous Hopwood decision, has stymied Texas with a law that has left A&M scrambling to clean up the Legislature's mess.

The law in question is Senate Bill 588. Senate Bill 588 requires all Texas public universities to offer admission to any student in the state who graduated in the top 10 percent of his or her high-school graduating class.

The bill is a brute-force means of encouraging diversity within state universities.

It is sort of the equivalent to cutting off one's finger to take care of a hangnail — once the finger is gone, that pesky hangnail will never be a problem again.

Since universities were barred from using affirmative action programs to attract minority students, the Legislature opened up the pool of guaranteed admits in the hope this would maintain diversity on campus.

They say hindsight is 20/20, but only the most myopic of prognosticators could have

failed to predict the results of Senate Bill 588 — this fall, A&M will be riddled with its largest freshman class since 1987.

Seven thousand two hundred freshman have accepted membership into the Class of 2002. That is about 1,000 more students than A&M had hoped for.

The state Legislature had A&M plug the leak in the dam caused by Hopwood, only to be buried under the flood created by Senate Bill 588.

An increase in the number of admissions A&M offered, however, did not cause this flood of students. A&M usually accepts students in the top-10 percent of their class.

Dr. Ronald Douglas, execu-

fair share of winners and losers on campus.

Among the losers is the Class of '02 itself. Although the University has opened extra sections in primarily freshman courses, with 1,000 extra bodies competing for those seats, freshman classes are bound to be crowded.

High-school students who are not in the top-10 percent of their class lose, too. A&M is going to have to adjust the number of students it accepts each year so that the surprising Class of '02 becomes a one-time occurrence.

This has to be especially bitter for students attending high schools with rigorous academic programs, where a student in the eleventh percentile of his class may have been in the top one percent at another school.

Perhaps the biggest losers, though, are students on the admissions waiting list.

These students will not be offered admission to A&M. As a consolation prize, they will be offered spots at Texas A&M University at Galveston or guaranteed transfer into A&M next year.

There are, however, a couple of winners.

Proponents of cultural diversity will be pleased to know that there will be more minority students in the Class of '02 than in A&M's previous two classes.

Also, the Corps of Cadets is anticipating between 750 and 800 new freshmen for this upcoming year, an increase from 630 freshmen in the Class of '01.

So, thanks to the state Legislature, Aggies can expect to meet a lot of freshman in the fall.

The Legislature also deserves thanks for offering proof that although quick fixes may help with a problem, they also make a mess.

Too bad the Legislature isn't the one who has to clean it up.

Similarly, it is the well-intentioned Texas Legislature that has opened a Pandora's box full of problems for Texas A&M University this coming fall.

It has been shown that if students are given acceptance information earlier there is a likelihood that acceptance numbers go up," Douglas said. Since a lot, and I do mean a lot, of high-school seniors knew for certain they would be getting into A&M, they decided to come.

So, is the unusually large Class of '02 too big a burden for A&M to bear? Well, no, but this enormous class has created its

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